



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: August 15, 2019

Agenda Item: Future Fisheries Improvement Program Summer Funding

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda: 10 Minutes

Background:

The Future Fisheries Improvement Program continues to provide funds for projects that restore fishery habitats in streams, rivers, and lakes for the benefit of wild fisheries. Applications are reviewed twice each year by the 14-member Citizen Review Panel appointed by the Governor. Recommendations are forwarded to the Fish & Wildlife Commission for consideration and approval. For the summer 2019 funding cycle, the Citizen Review Panel recommends funding 11 of 12 submitted proposals at a program cost of \$510,225. Matching funds or in-kind contributions from outside sources total \$1,728,399 for a 3.4-to-1 match.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

The public is informed about program funding opportunities via news releases, a public meeting, and information posted on FWP's website. The Citizen Review Panel conducted a public meeting and reviewed applications, discussed proposed projects with applicants in attendance, and provided the opportunity for public comment. No public comment was received at the meeting, except from applicants in attendance. All applications received for the funding cycle were posted on FWP's website, which allowed viewers to submit comments online. No online comments were received. Environmental Assessments (EAs) were prepared for four of the 11 projects recommended for funding. Of the remaining seven, three have been or will be assessed under the federal National Environmental Policy Act, three will have EAs completed regionally, and one has an EA already completed. The comment period for drafted EAs will end July 30, and three supportive comments have been received.

Alternatives and Analysis:

- A. The commission could approve funding recommendations for active projects submitted by the Citizen Review Panel and prioritized by the ranking committee. This alternative would provide funds to assist in the completion of projects that will improve habitat for wild fish populations.
- B. The commission could disapprove or modify the recommendations of the Citizen Review Panel. Under this alternative, applicants would need to seek other sources of funding or suspend projects that otherwise would have benefited wild fish populations.

Agency Recommendation and Rationale

FWP recommends the commission approve Alternative A, the funding recommendations as submitted by the Citizen Review Panel. Completion of these projects would benefit wild fish populations.

Proposed Motion:

I move to approve the Citizen Review Panel funding recommendations for the summer 2019 funding cycle of the Future Fisheries Improvement Program.